

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A photography apparatus which operates according to operation thereof by a customer, the photography apparatus comprising:

a first collection section which collects operation information representing an operating state of the photography apparatus; and

a processing section which carries out processing for transferring operation information collected by the first collection section to an information tabulating device which tabulates the operation information.

2. A photography apparatus according to claim 1, wherein:

the photography apparatus is provided with a function by which a subject is photographed and image data obtained by the photographing is recorded in an information storage medium; and

the first collection section collects, as the operation information, at least one of: a number of times photographing is carried out; numbers of uses of each of various kinds of photographing modes; a number of uses of a flash; numbers of uses of each of various kinds of flash emitting modes; numbers of uses of each of photographing magnifications during photographing; an amount of time that a moving picture is photographed; an amount of time that a photographed moving

picture is reproduced; a number of uses of a continuous photographing mode; a total number of times photographing is carried out in continuous photographing mode; a number of deletions of image data; numbers of deletions of image data for each of various kinds of photographing modes; a number of times a battery is changed; and a number of times the information storage medium is loaded into the photography apparatus.

3. A photography apparatus according to claim 1, wherein:

the photography apparatus is provided with a function by which a subject is photographed and image data obtained by the photographing is recorded in an information storage medium; and

the processing section executes, as the processing for transferring the operation information to the information tabulating device, processing by which the operation information is recorded in the information storage medium.

4. A photography apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising a communication section which can communicate with the information tabulating device through a communication line, wherein the processing section executes, as the processing for transferring the operation information to the information tabulating device, processing by which the operation information is transmitted to the information tabulating device through the communication section.

5. An information tabulating device comprising:

a second collection section which performs at least one of collection of respective operation information from each of a plurality of the photography apparatus according to claim 1, and collection of photographing information from each of the plurality of photography apparatus which is provided with a function by which a subject is photographed and image data obtained by the photographing is recorded in an information storage medium together with the photographing information representing photographing conditions during photographing; and

a tabulation section which tabulates, for each model of the photography apparatus, the operation information or the photographing information, which has been collected by the second collection section.

6. A method of utilizing tabulated information, wherein:

at least one of the suitability of the performance with which a photography apparatus is provided, the suitability of the functions with which the photography apparatus is provided, and the durability of the photography apparatus is analyzed for each model of the photography apparatus, based on operation information or photographing information, which has been collected by the information tabulating device according to claim 5, for each model of the photography apparatuses, and the analyzed results are used for the design of the photography

apparatus.

7. A method of utilizing tabulated information according to claim 6, wherein lifetimes of components in the photography apparatus are analyzed for each of the photography apparatus, based on the operation information or the photographing information, which has been collected by the information tabulating device according to claim 5, and advice information representing advice regarding change or replacement of components in the photography apparatus is generated for each of the photography apparatus, based on results of the analysis.

8. A photography apparatus which photographs a subject, selectively using a plurality of functions, the photography apparatus comprising:

a control section which controls the photography apparatus so that information on use of each of the functions, which information is useful for improvement of each of the functions is collected;

a storing section which stores the collected information; and

a processing section which outputs the stored information.

9. A photography apparatus according to claim 8, wherein the processing section comprises at least one of a communication section which can transmit and receive

information and a removable storage medium.

10. A photography apparatus according to claim 8, wherein the information on use of each of the plurality of functions is at least one of a number of uses of each of the functions, an amount of time that each of the functions is used, and a repair history of components in the photography apparatus which respectively achieve the functions.

11. A photography apparatus according to claim 8, wherein the plurality of functions of the photography apparatus includes at least one of photographing, selection of photographing modes, use of a flash, selection of flash emitting mode, selection of photographing magnification, photographing of a moving picture, reproduction of a moving picture, continuous photographing, selection of continuous photographing mode, deletion of image data, change of a battery, and loading of a storage medium into the photography apparatus.

12. A functional improvement system for a photography apparatus comprising:

the photography apparatus according to claim 8;  
an accumulation section which accumulates information output from the processing section of the photography apparatus; and

an analysis section in which the information which has been accumulated in the accumulation section is analyzed, and results of the analysis are used for functional improvement of

the photography apparatus.

13. A functional improvement system for a photography apparatus according to claim 12, wherein each of the accumulation section and the analysis section is provided with a communication section, and the communication sections are connected to each other through a communication network.

14. A functional improvement system for a photography apparatus according to claim 13, wherein the photography apparatus further comprises a communication section which is connected to each of communication sections of the accumulation section and the analysis section through a communication network.

15. A functional improvement system for a photography apparatus according to claim 14, wherein the communication section of the photography apparatus is a cradle provided with a charging function and a communication function.

16. A functional improvement system for a photography apparatus according to claim 12, wherein the accumulation section includes a database.

17. A functional improvement system for a photography apparatus according to claim 12, wherein the results of the analysis of the information in the analysis section are input to the processing section of the photography apparatus.

18. A functional improvement system for a photography apparatus according to claim 17, wherein the results of the

analysis include advice to a user of the photography apparatus.

19. A functional improvement system for a photography apparatus according to claim 18, wherein the advice is related to at least one of change of components, repair, and selection of the functions.

20. A method for functional improvement of a photography apparatus which photographs a subject, selectively using plurality of functions, the method comprising:

collecting information on use of each of the functions which information is useful for improvement of each of the functions;

storing the collected information;

outputting the stored information;

accumulating the output information; and

analyzing the accumulated information and using the results of the analysis for functional improvement of the photography apparatus.